

MONTHLY NOTES

OF

The Library Association of the United Kingdom.

Contents:—Official Notices—March Monthly Meeting: Paper by Mr. Geo. R. Humphrey, "Librarians and the Working Classes"—Library Notes—Catalogues and Reports.

THE next MONTHLY MEETING of the Association will be held at the London Institution on Friday, May 4th, 1883, at 8 P.M., when Papers will be read by Mr. RICHARD GARNETT on "Librarianship in the Seventeenth Century"; and by Mr. HENRY WILSON on "An Old English Text (The Speculum Vitæ Christi)."

The attention of members is particularly called to Article 4 of the Constitution, by which the annual subscription for 1882-83 becomes "due in advance on the 5th of October. Any member not paying the subscription within six calendar months from that date shall, after notification, cease to belong to the Association."

Members are also reminded that they are invited to contribute an additional *voluntary* subscription of 2s. per annum towards the expenses of MONTHLY NOTES. The expense imposed upon the Association by their publication is a matter of some anxiety to the officers, who will be sorry if it should become necessary to reduce the quantity of printed matter below an average of sixteen pages monthly.

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING.

The Seventh Monthly Meeting of the Sixth Year of the Association was held at the London Institution, on Friday, April 6th, at 8 P.M., Mr. W. J. HAGGERSTON in the Chair. The Minutes of the last Meeting having been read and confirmed it was announced that the following gentlemen engaged in library administration had become Members of the Association: Mr. JAMES LATTER, Librarian to the Earl of Derby, Knowsley; the Rev. L. WHITE, Bayham

Abbey, Lamberhurst, Sussex; Mr. R. HENRY FARRAR, 25, Somerleyton Road, East Brixton, S.W.; Mr. R. SPENCE WATSON, LL.D., Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, and Mr. ADAM CARSE, Granville Road, Newcastle (Members of Public Library Committee, Newcastle).

Mr. ARTHUR JOSEPHS, 23, St. Charles's Square, Notting Hill, having been proposed and seconded at the previous Meeting, was elected a member.

Mr. Geo. H. PHILLIPS, Charlton Lodge, Wake Green Road, Birmingham, was proposed for election at the next Meeting by the SECRETARY, and seconded by Mr. TEDDER.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr. Geo. R. HUMPHERY, HON. SEC. and Librarian of Messrs. F. Braby and Co's Library and Club, to read a Paper on

LIBRARIANS AND THE WORKING CLASSES — OR CAN LIBRARIANS ASSIST THE WORKING CLASSES TO USE THEIR SATURDAY HALF-HOLIDAY PROFITABLY ?

IN this busy life, when economy of time is equivalent to the saving of money, when not content with shortening distance by rapid railway travelling, the most learned and scientific men of the world are striving still further to affect this object by the application of electricity to sound, light, and the means of communication, when a common pencil is not too small an object, or the lighting of our cities too large a subject for investigation. It therefore becomes of the utmost importance that we should not only use our time well, but profitably, not only our own time, but that of others. The busy man has less trouble to find employment than to decide what occupation will be most profitable. I can have no hesitation in classing our Librarians among the busy men of our country, and it will require no stretch of language to include the other class named in my proposition in this denomination also. The first part of this statement, I feel sure, I can take as being admitted, viz.—The advantage of economy in time, and the fact of the two classes being busy men. But from this point the difficulties of my case commence. On Saturday afternoons our Librarians are engaged—the working classes, as a rule, are not. I have therefore to show, or as lawyers would say, “make out a case,” that both classes are interested in the useful expenditure of this time, *i.e.* the Saturday afternoon.

I do not think it will be necessary to prove to this Association that we do not live to, or for, ourselves, but for each other. He best fulfils his mission who confers the greatest happiness on his fellow creatures. The Librarian is no exception to this rule; and, when he is master of the situation, he cannot better devote his time than to meeting a party of working men. In the first place showing the library under his charge, then explaining the various classes of literature, exhibiting specimens of some of the numerous styles of book making; introducing them to a study of Bibliography, giving a few well selected facts connected with the history of some par-

ticular books. This plan will direct the attention of the party to a line of thought, and then, in the convenient language of the distych

"Those shall read who never read before,
And those that always read, shall read the more."

I ask will not an afternoon be well spent, if a careless reader is converted into a student? or a superficial wader through novels, whose boast it is that he has *read* ("Heaven save the mark.") so many books, is transformed from a flippant retailer of second hand gunpowder to a teacher of elementary history in an evening class? Or if you shape the devourer of volumes of travel, that he may discern some difference between Don Quixote and Vasco de Gama; Gulliver and Columbus, or Robinson Crusoe and Dr. Livingstone? and, lastly, that you have made one or two men give a better reason than "Because it is." I must now beg to impress upon you a further advantage of which you will know but little. I allude to the after-discussion of these visits in the workshop. Men and women will talk, and when the conversation is not led by a good subject it is apt to degenerate into loose, immoral, or to say the least, meaningless gossip. Now, if we can succeed in initiating, stimulating or continuing healthy and instructive discussion, we have certainly contributed to the advancement of our people. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

But it will be objected that this is all theory. For the sake of argument, I will admit this, and proceed to show that it has "foundation in fact." When our library (Messrs. Frederick Braby & Co. Limited: see MONTHLY NOTES of this Association for July, 1881) was commenced, we found two causes contribute to the non-use of the books—first, inability to read; secondly, want of interest. The former was remedied, as far as the reticence of the men would allow, by evening classes for elementary education, the latter we attempted, and as I shall show successfully, to overcome, by taking advantage of our Saturday half holiday. The first application was made to Lord de Ros, the then (1870) Governor of the Tower of London, who so approved the object that he obtained permission for a party to be conducted over that ancient structure. A most intelligent warder was told off to conduct us. This excellent system has, in compliance with ignorant clamour, been altered. However, we had the advantage. I saw at once the usefulness of afternoons thus spent. Books were asked for, more than our then limited number could supply. Historical questions came upon us thick and fast. Classes for the study of history were in request; and the general good result exceeded all our expectations. The next gentleman laid under contribution was that friend of all classes, the late Dean Stanley. As I have published details of the connection of this great man with this movement, I will not trouble you with particulars, asking only your attention to two other selected visits in further illustration of my subject. One conducted by W. Overall, Esq., Librarian to the Corporation of London, and the other by Mr.

Douthwaite, Librarian to the Honourable Society of Grays Inn.* Both visits were conducted on the principle I have indicated. Both are gratefully retained in the memories of the men who formed the parties. Both gentlemen will be asked again to conduct some of our members, which is the best evidence of their success. Men have declared to me "that these two gentlemen gave them more information in two hours than they learned from books in two years." "That they never understood the city they lived in until they attended these parties." If this is doubted, ask the first twenty working-men you meet in any city, what they know about the place? apart from their own lives, and you will be astonished at their ignorance. This is also true of other classes.

I have organised these Saturday afternoon visits for the past thirteen years, varying in numbers from 12 (where so limited) to 150, conducted by, or with the permission of some of the most prominent of our countrymen. Such as, in addition to those already mentioned, the Dukes of Westminster and Wellington, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Professor Flower, the late Mr. J. Winter Jones, and Mr. Geo. Bullen of this Association. A long list could be given, and we have never had one single case of misconduct.

Following up my first statement, I repeat, few will doubt that time profitably spent is equal, in most cases, to money saved. It is therefore of the utmost importance, not only to the working classes, but to the country generally, that the workpeople should spend their time well. Our country is a vast joint stock company, in which we are all shareholders. It makes all the difference if that shareholding is increased or decreased. Be that shareholding money or time, the profit will be in accordance with the labour bestowed. Again, it is our duty, not only to act well ourselves, but to see that others do so also. It must never be overlooked that the drunken spendthrift and idle defaulter's (that is the correct name) share has to be made up by the sober, industrious and thrifty. The day has long since gone by when we argued that we were not "our brother's keeper."

I suppose it will be admitted that we need to cultivate *thinking* in an orderly manner, as well as acting in proper order. In fact, the exercise of the memory in a correct way is the first step to doing our work efficiently and successfully. If all this is true, and I do not expect it will be controverted, then if we as librarians can give the working classes the benefit of any knowledge we may have been able from our positions to have collected, we shall then render essential service to a class to whom it is of vast importance to economise their time, both in thinking and working. A few useful hints nicely wrapped up will have more effect upon a partially trained mind than a lecture. Mr. Overall said, quite incidentally, in wishing our party good afternoon, "That knowledge was of great use when we got old, our company being then sought after and courted rather

* Since the above was written, Mr. John Nicholson, Librarian to the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn has conducted a party most successfully through the hall and library of that body.

than shunned." This was carefully noted by some of the loosest thinkers and most careless of our party, and afterwards repeated in the factory.

Lastly, let me ask, in order that this shall not be merely as one Paper read, but that some practical good shall come out of it, that members of this Association will individually send an invitation to some neighbouring factory or working men's society to come on a particular Saturday afternoon at a certain hour, say three or four o'clock. Not too early, just allowing time for the men to be paid, get home, clean up, and reach your library. Not too late, so as to allow the terribly seductive influence of the ever open drink shop to lead them away. Be quite ready at the appointed time, having all examples placed on a table. Give them a cheerful welcome. Have a few curious but interesting anecdotes to relate. Give a few local historical facts. Where possible a chain of events that will assist the memory. Show books which have some special interest attached to them. You will be astonished with the result. If you can succeed in introducing to the minds of a few toilers the various epochs in the world's history or its literature, or induce a love of books or bibliography, or change the reader for amusement into a student of science or art, you will not have laboured in vain. But if, on the other hand, you should bring to light some Arkwright or Faraday, or add one more *Te Deum*, thrashed from the anvil of another Jackson, or fan the latent fire of a cotton spinner, that he may be sent to discover some at present unknown region: nay, add some names to those men from the ranks, upwards of one hundred of whom adorn the letter A of a one volume biographical dictionary, to say nothing of those whose origin is unknown: I repeat, to do any of these services to our country will amply repay you. Apart from all this, which may be speculative, you will be rewarded in this life by seeing some small trophy won from the severe battle-field of everyday life.

After a discussion, in the course of which Mr. Haggerston gave an account of the measures adopted at Newcastle to increase popular interest in the library, a vote of thanks was passed to the writer of the Paper and the meeting adjourned.

LIBRARY NOTES.

ABERDEEN.—On the 20th of March Mr. John Duguid Milne of Melgum, read a paper before the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen on the subject of the "Success of Free Public Libraries in Industrial Towns, and the necessity for a free public library in Aberdeen," Sheriff Dove Wilson presiding. Letters of apology were read from Dr. Bain, Lord Rector of the University, and some of the professors. A long discussion followed, and it was agreed that Mr. Milne's paper should be printed for distribution amongst the community.

CAMBRIDGE.—The Town Council have agreed to enlarge the Free Library by the erection of a new reading room. The new room will be 50 ft. by 44, with a separate entrance from the main street. Mr.

McDonell of London has been instructed to prepare the design for the new building.

CORSTORPHINE.—This library in Corstorphine village, near Edinburgh, was founded in 1856 by Dr. Fowler, who presented 100 volumes. The library now consists of 4,000 volumes, and the members subscribing to the library number nearly 100. The committee have always been willing to consider favourably applications from those who are unable to subscribe, and to admit readers free of charge. At the same time, the committee have recently issued a circular stating that they find they cannot continue this free list except to a very limited extent, unless they are supported by subscriptions from the public, thus furnishing another proof of the necessity of a library being either supported from the rates or from public generosity, if poor people, who are unable to pay subscriptions, are to be benefited by it.

DARLINGTON.—At the meeting of the Town Council on March 5, a letter was read from Sir J. W. Pease, M.P., on behalf of himself and Mr. Arthur Pease, as executors of their late brother, Mr. Edwd. Pease, stating that in his will he directed that his trustees should, "out of such parts of his personal estate as could be legally devoted to charitable purposes, apply the sum of £10,000 for the education of the poorer classes in the borough of Darlington, either by establishing or founding, or assisting in establishing or founding, a free library, or by scholarships for elementary schools for boys and girls, or in such other way as his trustees should, in their uncontrolled discretion, think fit." Although a large amount of discretion was vested in his trustees, they feel that they should be best carrying out his views by stating that, subject to the adoption by the town of the Free Libraries' Act, they were prepared to erect a building for the library, which, in addition to the value of the site, they were advised could be thoroughly well completed for £5,000; and that they were also prepared to spend a further sum on suitable furniture. The matter will be duly considered by the Town Council.

HANLEY.—Mr. Howard S. Pearson delivered a lecture at the Town Hall, Hanley, on February 15th on "Books and the Worth of Them." The lecture has been printed (with permission) by the Hanley Free Library Committee.

LONDON: HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Since the Easter recess the library and dining room have been illuminated by the electric light. The lighting of the room used for the grand committee on Law and Courts of Justice, which is effected by two gaslights of Sugg's latest patent, is said indeed (by the *Daily News*) to put the electric light quite in the shade.

NEWARK.—The Free Library which has been presented to Newark by Mr. William Gilstrap, of Farnham Park, Bury St. Edmunds, is approaching completion, and an account of the building appeared in the *Nottingham Daily Express* of March 24. The memorial stone was laid, it will be remembered, on Bank Holiday last year, but it is not announced when the opening ceremony will take place.

OXFORD: BODLEIAN LIBRARY.—The Bodleian Librarian has issued the following notice:—"All persons having the right of reading in the Library (or the Camera only), and being engaged in the study of any special subject, are invited to communicate with the Librarian who will endeavour to inform them without delay whenever any work bearing on the subject of their study is added to the Library."

TIPTON.—On March 24 a public meeting of the ratepayers was held to consider the desirability of adopting the Free Libraries Acts, the Chairman of the Local Board of Health presiding. The resolution in favour of adopting them was carried without a single dissentient.

WEST BROMWICH.—The Committee of the Free Library have recently taken steps for reading and news rooms in the outlying district. The houses and the population of West Bromwich are scattered, the borough being formed of four or five villages which ultimately will be joined as one large town. A reassessment of the town has taken place which has resulted in an increase in the Library rate of £150 per annum. This increase of income has been divided into three parts, and three reading and news rooms have been opened in the districts locally known as Spon Lane, Great Bridge and Hill Top. The rooms are necessarily small, £50 in each case being the only sum allowed for expenses. In two cases two large shop fronts are appropriated for the purpose, and in the third some unused offices admirably supply the purpose. The rooms are much frequented by readers who scarcely ever visited the Central Reading Room, the distance being too great to travel in an evening. About 300 books have been distributed to the rooms, and no doubt some time hence when the rate of the committee is again augmented Lending Libraries will be added to the rooms for the convenience of distant borrowers.

Mr. Credland has written in reference to our note on his statistics that he had found the number he quoted in his paper in a newspaper, and too hastily assumed its correctness. Talking of statistics, we notice that the current number of the *Bibliographer* reprints a list of Paris libraries, with the number of volumes they are supposed to contain. Among other curious features in this list, we notice the "Bibliothèque du Louvre," which was, as we thought everybody knew, burnt in 1871. But the most curious thing about it is the innocent and astonishing statement that "the Bibliothèque Nationale contains more than half a million volumes!" In that case it would rank, not only far below the British Museum, but also below the libraries of Berlin, Munich, Strasburg, and St. Petersburg. The number, we may observe, is stated in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* at 2,290,000 volumes, exclusive of MSS.

On the 7th of March an interesting ceremony took place at Edur—the laying of the foundation stone of a library and clock-tower, which have been presented to his subjects by the Maharajah Shree Kesh-

risinggi, to commemorate his accession. The building is to be named the Wodehouse Library and Clock-tower, and the stone was laid by Colonel Wodehouse.

It has been announced that the Trustees of the British Museum have recommended to the Treasury the purchase of the Ashburnham MSS.

Our readers will have observed with gratification that at the graduation ceremonial of the University of Edinburgh, held on March 20, the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon our distinguished member, Mr. Richard Garnett. We may fairly assume that this well deserved compliment was intended as an acknowledgment, not only of Mr. Garnett's critical skill and literary achievements, but quite as much of the wide and varied knowledge, and the kindness and courtesy which have enabled Mr. Garnett to render such eminent service to a very wide circle of students and scholars in the great reading-room of the British Museum.

LIBRARY CATALOGUES AND REPORTS.

Dresden. Verzeichniss der Neuen Werke der Königl. (Eeffentlich-) en Bibliothek zu Dresden. 1882. Herausgegeben von Paul Emil Richter. Dresden, 8vo, pp. 55, double coll.

The list of accessions published annually by the Secretary to the Dresden Royal Library consists of an alphabetical part, followed by an elaborate classification into twenty-six classes. It is prepared with Herr Richter's well known care and accuracy.

Doncaster Borough Free Library. Supplement to the Index Catalogue. Compiled by John Ballinger, Librarian. Price Three-pence. 8vo, pp. 80.

Contains the accessions for the past three years, catalogued upon the dictionary system. The contents of collectaneous work are fully set out. Part II contains a catalogue of the reference department.

Bristol Museum and Library. Report of Proceedings at the Twelfth Annual Meeting, held 15th February. 1883. . . . 8vo, pp. 28, and wrapper.

The income for the year was £1,381 4s. 6d. and the expenditure £1,271 17s. 7d. The number of persons entitled to make use of this library was 841, being the highest total yet attained. The expenditure upon books was £123 11s. 1d. A list of subscribers is appended.

Halifax Public Library. First Annual Report, 1883. 8vo, pp. 6.

The acts having been adopted March 23, 1881, the news-room was opened March 20, 1882, and has been very largely used, and the library has been recently opened. The number of volumes in the library is 19,598, of which 1,304 are in the reference department. The rate produces £1,050. The committee have leased the assembly rooms for five years.

City of Norwich. Annual Report of the Free Library Committee to the Town Council. 1882. 8vo, pp. 12.

The lending department was open 196 days, and the issues were 30,892, as against 32,836 for 1881. The number of volumes in this department is 6,912. The reference department numbers 1,140 volumes. The number of persons using the reading room is estimated at nearly 131,000. The rate produced £950.

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